



Monthly Report for February 2014

Submitted February 28, 2014

Outreach

a. Frederick County Board of Education - The briefing for the Frederick County Board of Education had to be postponed until March 26th due to the weather. The Board is interested in getting a better understanding of the MLDS system, its capabilities, and how the system and the work of the Center can be beneficial to the Board of Education. The Board is also particularly interested in understanding the privacy and security safeguards that will protect their students' data.

b. Governor's Leadership Council Task Force on Arts Education in Maryland Schools - On February 12th, Ross Goldstein gave a briefing for the members of the Arts Task Force. Ross provided an overview of the MLDS Center, how it is organized, how data security and privacy are addressed, and the research agenda. The Council was particularly interested in understanding how the MLDS Center and its research agenda may be beneficial to the mission of the Task Force. While there are no policy questions that directly address arts related issues, Ross noted that the questions are written broadly and could allow for inclusion of an arts related issue. For example, the first policy question asks whether students are academically prepared to enter college. Arts education could be addressed as a factor of academic preparedness. Further, Ross encouraged the members of the Task Force to come to a Governing Board meeting to present their research interests, noting that it would be helpful to the Board when they begin to establish additional policy questions.

c. Data Quality Campaign - Data Governance Expert Group - DQC periodically assembles working groups to analyze a particular policy goal to determine "what good looks like." The goal is to get perspectives of different government and policy experts to build a rubric that identifies a set of best practices and analyzes how effectively states are meeting those best practices. This working group will be looking to identify strong governance policies for state longitudinal data systems. Ross Goldstein and Jason Perkins-Cohen are both members of this working group.

Staffing

a. Position Announcements - The following positions are currently being advertised: Network Engineer, Database Administrator, Oracle Business Intelligence Enterprise Edition Developer and Analyst, and Webmaster.

b. Senior Web Designer/Project Manager - Staff has been interviewing contractors to provide an individual to serve as a senior web designer and project manager. Funding is available for this resource through the end of the year. Having this high level resource to develop a strategic plan for the website and carry out that plan will help expedite a new MLDS presence online.

Inter-Agency Agreements

a. UMB, SSW - The agreement with the University of Maryland, Baltimore has been completed. As discussed in the last report, the outstanding issues that needed to be resolved related to copyright and publishing rights of the University and the researchers. The agreement resolves these issues by stating that the MLDS Center owns the research produced by UMB for the Center. However, UMB has the right to further develop the works created for the Center for additional research and education purposes. Further, UMB has the right to publish those works, subject to review and approval by the MLDS Governing Board. The MLDS Governing Board may only withhold approval if:



- The proposed publication relies on data that has been embargoed by a non-state entity,
- The proposed publication relies on data which is subject to an enforcement action against MLDS or a state agency that supplied the data,
- The publication relies on previously unreleased data that is subject of a pending lawsuit against the State or one of the LEAs, or
- Upon advice of the Office of the Attorney General, there is another legal impediment related to the source of the data.

Staff is now working out certain contract management issues, including invoicing and payments.

b. MSDE, MHEC, and DLLR - There are now two MOUs with each of the agencies that are providing data to the Center. One MOU addresses administrative and staffing issues and the other addresses data sharing. The data sharing MOUs are pending resolution of an issue regarding the length of time PII data may be maintained by the MLDS Center before it is destroyed. Federal law, (34 CFR 99.35) requires that the written agreements authorizing the transfer of data from the educational agencies to a third party specify in writing the time period in which the PII must be destroyed. However, the law does not provide a specific length of time which may not be exceeded for the storage of PII within a longitudinal data system. The only guidance within the language of this regulation is that the PII must be "destroyed when no longer needed for the purposes listed in paragraph (a) of this section." Dawn O'Croinin, AAG, has organized a conference call with the U.S. Department of Education's Privacy Technical Assistance Center to get guidance on this issue.

The administrative MOU with MSDE is complete. The administrative MOUs with DLLR and MHEC are pending resolution of issues relating to staffing.

Legislation

Senate Bill 833 and its cross-file HB 1508 have generated a lot of concern among educational agencies and institutions. Those concerns include the expansion of what information is considered personally identifiable information, how long personally identifiable information data can be maintained, and the ability of educational agencies and institutions to fulfill data requests and comply with reporting requirements. The bill does attempt to exempt MLDS Center by stating that the Center is not an educational agency for purposes of the bill. However, the ability of other educational agencies to maintain and share data with the MLDS Center is still a concern. The Maryland Independent Colleges and Universities Association has been coordinating efforts among other educational agencies to inform legislators of the consequences of the bills.

Reporting and Portal Services Branch

As mentioned under "Staffing," above, plans have been developed to use a contractor to manage website updates in the near term. The scope of these updates will include the creation of a public-facing website aligned with State website design standards, new site architecture that places greater emphasis on dashboards based on non-sensitive data and less emphasis on live dashboards based on secure data, and a change management process allowing regular review of content changes. In addition, the contractor will implement various content upgrades. Design of these upgrades has begun and will continue in March. A candidate for this contract position has been identified and an offer has been extended.

IT and Data Management Branch

The research team coded which variables will be applicable to answering specific policy questions. Over the past month MSDE, MHEC and DLLR have been aligning this data request from the research team with the availability of data at the agencies. A Data Governance Advisory Board meeting is scheduled to meet March 5th to support the data collection activities (as described in the *Data Security and Safeguarding Plan*)

and to review a revised Data Inventory as part of the next MLDS Governing Board meeting.

The Master Data Management (MDM) system is completed and end-to-end organization data loads for MSDE, DLLR and IPEDS have been successfully completed and tested. Testing for the person data has been initiated this past month. The MDM system is currently in the development environment and we continue to work with the Race to the Top Team at MSDE and DPSCS staff to develop a deployment schedule for migration to test and production. In order to meet the needs of the developing system, additional servers and backup capabilities will be part of the deployment plan which will be funded by the State Longitudinal Grant Funds.

Research and Policy Branch

February was a very busy month working on data inventory tasks preparing for the initial data collection. For example: completing the coding of CEDS for the Early Learning data elements; and meeting with agencies, MHEC and DLLR, to discuss how the CEDS inventory fits up with the data they have. The RPB has also continued searching and synthesizing literature in preparation for research with the Center data on the Policy Research Questions in the near future.

The third Research Series presentation was held at the Loews Hotel in Annapolis. Jon Enriquez, Associate Director for the Reporting and Portal Services Branch, gave the presentation on postsecondary financial aid. The March 7th Research Series will once again be at the Loews Hotel in Annapolis (12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.), and will be a panel discussion on workforce issues. We are working on the April and May Research Series, which will be two more panel discussions tentatively addressing online education and early learning/childcare workforce issues.